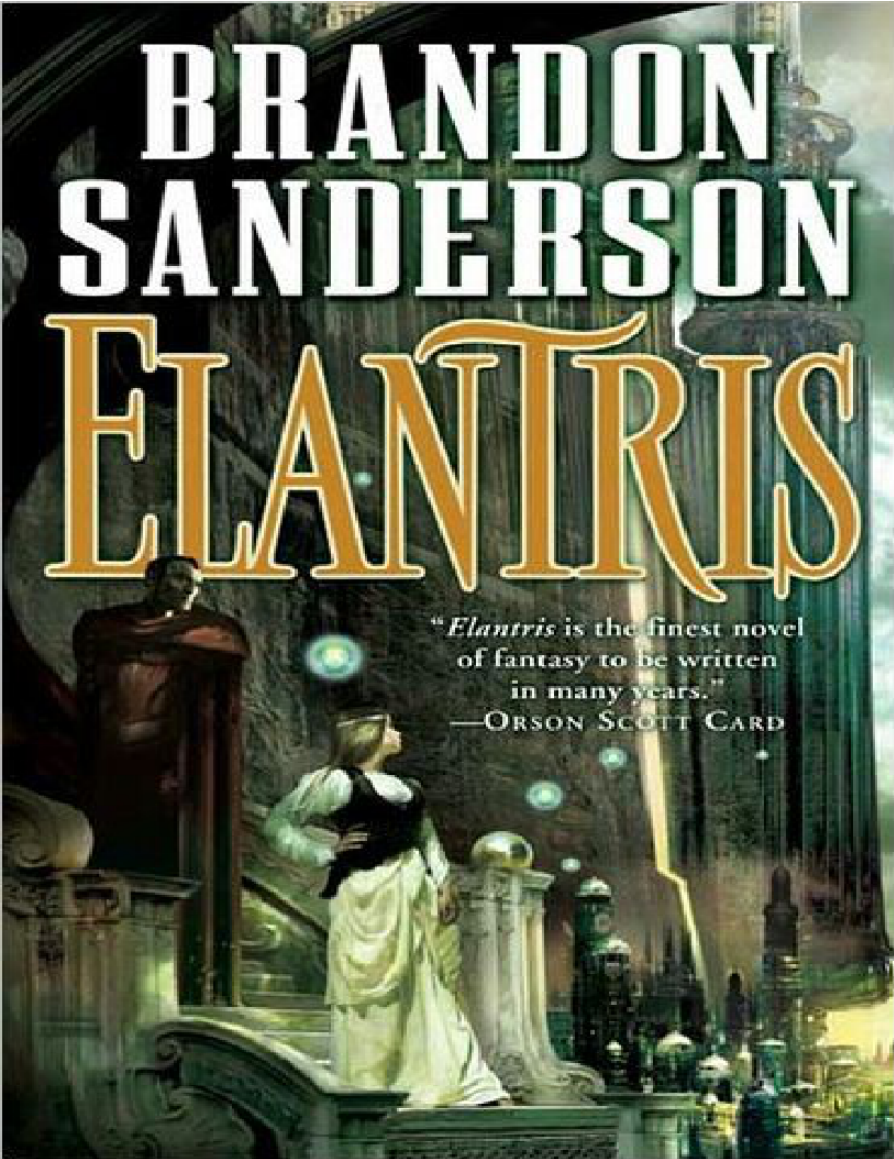


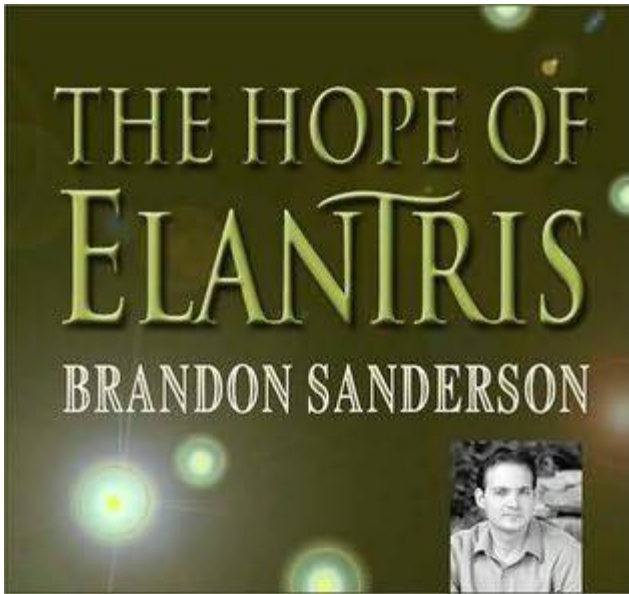
The book cover features a detailed illustration of a woman in a white and black dress standing on a balcony, looking up at a massive, dark, and somewhat ruined cityscape. A bright beam of light descends from the sky, illuminating the scene. Several glowing blue spheres float in the air. The title 'ELANTRIS' is written in large, ornate, gold-colored letters, while the author's name 'BRANDON SANDERSON' is in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters at the top.

BRANDON SANDERSON

ELANTRIS

*"Elantris is the finest novel
of fantasy to be written
in many years."*

—ORSON SCOTT CARD



The Hope of Elantris

Book Jacket

Tags: SS

INTRODUCTION The following is a short story I wrote in the ELANTRIS world back in January of 2006. At that point, ELANTRIS had only been out in stores for about seven or eight months, but I actually hadn't written anything new on the story or world since 2000, when I'd finished the first draft of the original book. This story was originally posted for sale on Amazon.com; once the contract with them ran out, I posted it here. There were always a few holes in the manuscript where I decided not to include viewpoints or sections of explanation in the name of streamlining, particularly at the end. In the back of my mind, I knew what happened. This story talks about one of those holes; it is meant to be read after you've finished the novel and takes place during the events of the climax. At the bottom, I've written a further explanation of why I wrote this piece. Some of you may find it interesting to read this ahead of time; I put it at the bottom, however, as I know others would rather enjoy the story without bias before hand, then read my thoughts afterward. Either way, if you haven't read the novel ELANTRIS, this contains major spoilers. Might I suggest reading the book first? This story won't work at all for you if you haven't. As always, thanks for reading!

The Hope of Elantris

By Brandon Sanderson

"My lord," Ashe said, hovering in through the window. "Lady Sarene begs your forgiveness. She's going to be a tad late for dinner."

"A tad?" Raoden asked, amused as he sat at the table. "Dinner was supposed to start an hour ago."

Ashe pulsed slightly. "I'm sorry, my lord. But. . .she made me promise to relay a message if you complained. 'Tell him,' she said, 'that I'm pregnant and it's his fault, so that means he has to do what I want.'"

Raoden laughed.

Ashe pulsed again, looking as embarrassed as a Seon could, considering he was simply a ball of light.

Raoden sighed, resting his arms on the table of his palace inside Elantris. The walls around him glowed with a very faint light, and no torches or lanterns were necessary. He'd always wondered about the lack of lantern brackets in Elantris. Galladon had once explained that there were plates made to glow when pressed-but they'd both forgotten just how much light had come from the stones themselves.

He looked down at his empty plate. *We once struggled so hard for just a little bit of food*, he thought. *Now it's so commonplace that we can spend an hour dallying before we eat.*

Yet, food was plentiful. Raoden himself could turn garbage into fine corn. Nobody in Arelon would ever go hungry again. Still, thinking about such things took his mind back to New Elantris, and the simple peace he'd forged inside the city.

"Ashe," Raoden said, a thought suddenly occurring to him. "I've been meaning to ask you something."

"Of course, your majesty."

"Where were you during those last hours before Elantris was restored?" Raoden asked. "I don't remember anything of you for most of the night. In fact, the only time I remember seeing you is when you came to tell me that Sarene had been kidnapped and taken to Teod."

"That's true, your majesty," Ashe said.

"So, where were you?"

"It is a long story, your majesty," the Seon said, floating down beside Raoden's chair. "It began when Lady Sarene sent me ahead to New Elantris, to warn Galladon and Karata that she was sending them a shipment of weapons. That was just before the monks attacked Kae, and I went to New Elantris, completely unaware of what was about to

occur. . . ."

#

Matisse took care of the children.

That was her job, in New Elantris. Everyone had to have a job; that was Spirit's rule. She didn't mind her job-actually, she rather enjoyed it. She'd been doing it for longer than Spirit had been around. Ever since Dashe had found her and taken her back to Karata's palace, Matisse had been watching after the little ones. Spirit's rules just made it official.

Yes, she enjoyed the duty. Most of the time.

"Do we really have to go to bed, Matisse?" Teor asked, giving her his best wide-eyed look. "Can't we stay up, just this once?"

Matisse folded her arms, raising a hairless eyebrow at the little boy. "You had to go to bed yesterday at this time," she noted. "And the day before. And, actually, the day before that. I don't see why you think today should be any different."

"Something's going on," said Tiil, stepping up beside his friend. "The adults are all drawing Aons."

Matisse glanced out the window. The children-the fifty or so of them beneath her care-stayed in an open-windowed building dubbed the "Roost" because of the intricate carvings of birds on most of its walls. The Roost was located near the center of the city-within-a-city-close to Spirit's own home, the Korathi Chapel where he held most of his important meetings. The adults wanted to keep a close watch on the children.

Unfortunately, that meant that the children could also keep a close watch on the adults. Outside the window, flashes of light sparked from hundreds of fingers drawing Aons in the air. It was late-far later than the children should have been up-but it had been particularly difficult to get them to bed this night.

Tiil is right, she thought. *Something is going on*. That, however, was no reason to let him stay up-especially because the longer he stayed awake, the longer it would be before she'd be able to go out and investigate the commotion herself.

"It's nothing," Matisse said, looking back at the children. Though some of them had begun to bed down in their brightly-colored sheets, many had perked up, and were watching Matisse deal with the two trouble-makers.

"Doesn't look like 'nothing' to me," Teor said.

"Well," Matisse said, sighing. "They're writing Aons. If you're that

interested, I suppose that we could make an exception and let you stay up. . .assuming you want to practice writing Aons. I'm sure we could fit in another school lesson tonight."

Teor and Tiil both paled. Drawing Aons was what one did in school-something that Spirit had forced them to begin attending again. Matisse smiled slyly to herself as the two boys backed away.

"Oh, come now," she said. "Go get your quills and paper. We could draw Aon Ashe a hundred or so times."

The boys got the hint and slipped back to their respective beds. On the other side of the room, several of the other workers were moving among the children, making certain that they were sleeping. Matisse did likewise.

"Matisse," a voice said. "I can't sleep."

Matisse turned toward where a young girl was sitting up in her bedroll. "How do you know, Riika?" Matisse said, smiling slightly. "We just put you to bed-you haven't tried to sleep yet."

"I know I won't be able to," the little girl said pertly. "Mai always tells me a story before I sleep. If he doesn't, I can't sleep."

Matisse sighed. Riika rarely slept well-especially on nights when she asked for her Seon. It had, of course, gone mad when Riika had been taken by the Shaod.

"Lay down, dear," Matisse said soothingly. "See if sleep comes."

"It won't," Riika said, but she did lay down.

Matisse made the rest of her rounds, then walked to the front of the room. She glanced over the huddled forms-many of which were still shuffling and moving-and acknowledged that she felt their same apprehensiveness. Something was wrong with this night. Lord Spirit had disappeared, and while Galladon told them not to worry, Matisse found it a foreboding sign.

"What *are* they doing out there?" Idotris whispered quietly from beside her.

Matisse glanced outside, where many the adults were standing around Galladon, drawing the Aons in the night.

"Aons don't work," Idotris said. The teenage boy was, perhaps, two years older than Matisse-not that such things really mattered in Elantris, where everyone's skin was the same blotchy grey, their hair limp or simply gone. The Shaod tended to make ages difficult to determine.

"That's no reason not to practice Aons," Matisse said. "There's a power to them. You can see it."

Indeed, there was a power behind the Aons. Matisse had always been able to feel it-raging behind them lines of light drawn in the air.

Idotris snorted. "Useless," he said, folding his arms.

Matisse smiled. She wasn't certain if Idotris was *always* so grumpy, or if he just tended to be that way when he worked at the Roost. He didn't seem to like the fact that he, as a young teenager, had been regulated to child-care instead of being allowed to join Dashe's soldiers.

"Stay here," she said, wandering out of the Roost toward the open courtyard where the adults were standing.

Idotris just grunted in his usual way, sitting down to make certain none of the children snuck out of the sleeping room, nodding to a few other teenage boys who had finished seeing to their charges.

Matisse wandered through the open streets of New Elantris. The night was crisp, but the cold didn't bother Matisse. That was one of the advantages of being an Elantrian.

She seemed to be one of the few that could see things that way. The others didn't look at being an Elantrian as an 'advantage,' no matter what Lord Spirit said. To Matisse, however, his words made sense. But, perhaps that had to do with her situation. On the outside, she'd been a beggar-she'd spent her life being ignored and feeling useless. Yet, inside of Elantris she was needed. Important. The children looked up to her, and she didn't have to worry about begging or stealing food.

True, things had been fairly bad before Karata had found her in a sludge-filled alley. And, there were the wounds. Matisse had one on her cheek-a cut she'd gotten soon after entering Elantris. It still burned with the same pain it had the moment she'd gotten it. Yet, that was a small price to pay. At Karata's palace, Matisse had found her first real taste of usefulness. That sense of belonging had only grown stronger when Matisse-along with the rest of Karata's band-had moved to New Elantris.

Of course, there was something else she'd gained by getting thrown into Elantris: a father.

Dashe turned, smiling in the lanternlight as she saw her approach. He wasn't her real father, of course. She'd been an orphan even before the Shadod had taken her. And, like Karata, Dashe was kind of a 'parent' to all of the children they'd found and brought to the palace.

Yet, Dashe seemed to have a special affection for Matisse. The stern warrior smiled more when Matisse was around, and she was the one he called on when he needed something important done. One day,

she'd simply started calling him Father. He'd never objected.

He laid a hand on her shoulder as she joined him at the very edge of the courtyard. In front of them, a hundred or so people moved their arms in near unison. Their fingers left glowing lines in the air behind them-the trails of light that had once produced the magics of AonDor. Galladon stood at the front of the group, shouting out instructions in his loose Dula drawl.

"Never thought I'd see the day when that Dula taught people Aons," Dashe said quietly, his other hand resting on the pommel of his sword.

He's tense too, Matisse thought. She looked up. "Be nice, Father. Galladon is a good man."

"He's a good man, perhaps," Dashe said. "But he's no scholar. He messes up the lines more than not."

Matisse didn't point out that Dashe himself was pretty terrible when it came to drawing Aons. She eyed Dashe, noting the frown on his lips. "You're mad that Spirit hasn't come back yet," she said.

Dashe nodded. "He should be here, with his people, not chasing that woman."

"There might be important things for him to learn outside," Matisse said quietly. "Things to do with other nations and armies."

"The outside doesn't concern us," Dashe said. He could be a stubborn one, at times.

Well, most times, actually.

At the front of the crowd, Galladon spoke. "Good," he said. "That's Aon Daa-the Aon for power. Kolo? Now, we have to practice adding the Chasm Line. We won't add it to Aon Daa. Don't want to blow holes in our pretty sidewalks now, do we? We'll practice it on Aon Rao instead-that one doesn't seem to do anything important."

Matisse frowned. "What's he talking about, Father?"

Dashe shrugged. "Seems that Spirit believes the Aons might work now, for some reason. We've been drawing them wrong all along, or something like that. I can't see how the scholars who designed them could have missed an entire line for every Aon, though."

Matisse doubted that scholars had ever 'designed' the Aons. There was just something to. . .primal about them. They were things of nature. They hadn't been designed-any more than the wind had been designed.

Still, she said nothing. Dashe was a kind and determined man, but he didn't have much of a mind for scholarship. That was fine with Matisse-it had been Dashe's sword, in part, that had saved New

Elantris from destruction at the hands of the wildmen. There was no finer warrior in all of New Elantris than her father.

Yet, she did watch with curiosity as Galladon talked about the new line. It was a strange one, drawn across the bottom of the Aon.

And. . .this makes the Aons work? She thought. It seemed like such a simple fix. Could it be possible?

The sound of a cleared throat came from behind them, and they turned, Dashe nearly pulling his sword.

A Seon hung in the air behind them. Not one of the mad ones that floated madly about Elantris, but a sane one, glowing with a full light.

"Ashe!" Matisse said happily.

"Lady Matisse," Ashe said, bobbing in the air.

"I'm no lady!" she said. "You know that."

"The title has always seemed appropriate to me, Lady Matisse," he said. "Lord Dashe. Is Lady Karata nearby?"

"She's in the library," Dashe said, taking his hand off the sword.

Library? Matisse thought. *What library?*

"Ah," Ashe said in his deep voice. "Perhaps I can deliver my message to you, then, as Lord Galladon appears to be busy."

"If you wish," Dashe said.

"There is a new shipment coming, my lord," Ashe said quietly. "Lady Sarene wished that you be made aware of it quickly, as it is of an . . .important nature."

"Food?" Matisse asked.

"No, my lady," Ashe said. "Weapons."

Dashe perked up. "Really?"

"Yes, Lord Dashe," the Seon said.

"Why would she send those?" Matisse asked, frowning.

"My mistress is worried," Ashe said quietly. "It seems that tensions are growing on the outside. She said. . .well, she wants New Elantris to be prepared, just in case."

"I'll gather some men immediately," Dashe said, "and go collect the weapons."

Ashe bobbed, indicating that he thought this to be a good idea. As her father walked off, Matisse eyed the Seon, a thought occurring to her. Maybe. . . .

"Ashe, could I borrow you for a moment?" she asked.

"Of course, Lady Matisse," the Seon said. "What do you need?"

"Something simple, really," Matisse said. "But, it might just help. . . ."

#

Ashe finished his story, and Matisse smiled to herself, eying the sleeping form of the little girl Riika in her bedroll. The child seemed peaceful for the first time in weeks.

Bringing Ashe into the Roost had initially provoked quite a reaction from the children who weren't asleep. Yet, as he'd begun to talk, Matisse's instincts had proven correct. The Seon's deep, sonorous voice had quieted the children. Ashe had a rhythm about his speech that was wonderfully soothing. Hearing a story from a Seon had not only coaxed little Riika to sleep, but the rest of the stragglers as well.

Matisse stood, stretching her legs, then nodded toward the doors outside. Ashe hovered behind her, passing the sullen Idotris at the front doors again. He was tossing pebbles toward a slug that had somehow found its way into New Elantris.

"I'm sorry to take so much of your time, Ashe," Matisse said quietly when they were far enough not to wake the children.

"Nonsense, Lady Matisse," Ashe said. "Lady Sarene can spare me for a bit, I think. Besides, it good to tell stories again. It has been some time since my mistress was a child."

"You were Passed to Lady Sarene when she was that young?" Matisse asked, curious.

"At her birth, my lady," Ashe said.

Matisse smiled wistfully.

"You shall have your own Seon some day, I should think, Lady Matisse," Ashe said.

Matisse cocked her head. "What makes you say that?"

"Well, there was a time when almost no Elantrian went without a Seon. I'm beginning to think that Lord Spirit may just be able to fix this city-after all, he fixed AonDor. If he does, we shall find you a Seon of your own. Perhaps one named Ati. That is your own Aon, is it not?"

"Yes," Matisse said. "It means hope."

"A fitting Aon for you, I believe," Ashe said. "Now, if my duties here are finished, perhaps I should-"

"Matisse!" a voice said.

Matisse cringed, glancing at the Roost, filled with its sleeping occupants. A light was bobbing in the night, coming down a side-street-the source of the yelling.

"Matisse?" the voice demanded again.

"Hush, Mareshe!" Matisse hissed, crossing the street quietly to where the man stood. "The children are sleeping!"

"Oh," Mareshe said, pausing. The haughty Elantrian wore standard New Elantris clothing-bright trousers and shirt-but he had modified his with a couple of sashes which he believed made the costume more 'artistic.'

"Where's that father of yours?" Mareshe asked.

"Training the people with swords," Matisse said quietly.

"What?" Mareshe asked. "It's the middle of the night!"

Matisse shrugged. "You know Dashe. Once he gets an idea in his head. . . ."

"First Galladon wanders off," Mareshe grumbled, "now Dashe is off waving swords in the night. If only Lord Spirit would come back. . . ."

"Galladon's gone?" Matisse asked, perking up.

Mareshe nodded. "He disappears like this sometimes. Karata too. They'll never tell me where they've gone. Always so secretive! 'You're in charge, Mareshe' they say, then go off to have secret conferences without me. Honestly!" With that, the man wandered off, bearing his lantern with him.

Off somewhere secret, Matisse thought. *That library Dashe mentioned?* She eyed Ashe, who was still hovering beside her. Perhaps if she coaxed him enough, he'd tell her-

At that moment, the screaming began.

The shouts were so sudden, so unexpected, that Matisse jumped. She spun about, trying to determine the location of the sounds. They seemed to be coming from the front of New Elantris.

"Ashe!" she said.

"I'm already going, Lady Matisse," the Seon said, zipping into the air, a glowing speck in the night.

The yells continued. Distant, echoing. Matisse shivered, backing up unconsciously. She heard other things. The ring of metal against metal.

She turned back toward the Roost. Taid, the adult who supervised the Roost, had walked out of the building in his nightgown. Even in the darkness, Matisse could see a look of concern on his face.

"Wait here," he said.

"Don't leave us!" Idotris said, looking around in fright.

"I'll be back," Taid said, rushing away.

Matisse shared a look with Idotris. The other teenagers who had been on duty watching the kids had already gone to their own homes for the night. Only Idotris and she remained.

"I'm going to go with him," Idotris said, stalking after Taid.

"Oh, no you don't," Matisse said, grabbing his arm and pulling him back. In the distance, the yelling continued.

She glanced toward the Roost. "Go wake the kids."

"What?" Idotris said indignantly. "After all the work we did to get them to sleep?"

"Do it," Matisse snapped. "Get them up, and have them put their shoes on."

Idotris resisted for a moment, then grumbled something and stalked inside the room. A moment later, she could hear him doing as she asked, rousing the children. Matisse rushed over to a building across the street-one of the supply buildings. Inside, she found two lanterns with oil in them, and some flint and steel.

She paused. *What am I doing?*

Just being prepared, she told herself, shivering as the screaming continued. It seemed to be getting closer. She rushed back across the street.

"My lady!" Ashe's voice said. She glanced up to see that the Seon was flying back down toward her. His Aon was so dim that she could barely see him.

"My lady," Ashe said urgently. "Soldiers have attacked New Elantris!"

"What?" she asked, shocked.

"They wear red and have the height and dark hair of Fjordells, my lady," Ashe said. "There are hundreds of them. Some of your soldiers are fighting at the front of the city, but there are far too few of them. New Elantris is already overrun! My lady-the soldiers are coming this way, and they're searching through the buildings!"

Matisse stood, dumbfounded.

No. No, it can't happen. No here. This place is peaceful. Perfect. I escaped the outside world. I found a place where I belonged. It can't come after me.

"My lady!" Ashe said, sounding terrified. "Those screams. . . . I think. . . I think the soldiers are attacking the people they find!"

And they're coming this way.

Matisse stood, lanterns clutched in numb fingers. This was the end, then. After all, what could she do? Nearly a child herself, a beggar, a girl without family or home. What could she do?

I take care of the children. It's my job.

It's the job Lord Spirit gave me.

"We have to get them out," Matisse said, sprinting toward the Roost.

"They know where to look because we cleaned this section of Elantris. The city is huge-if we get the children out into the dirty part, we can hide them."

"Yes, my lady," Ashe said.

"You go find my father!" Matisse said. "Tell him what we're doing."

With that, she entered the Roost, Ashe hovering away into the night. Inside, Idotris had done as she asked, and the children were groggily putting on their shoes.

"Quickly, children," Matisse said.

"What's going on?" Tiil demanded.

"We've got to go," Matisse said to the young troublemaker. "Till, Teor, I'm going to need your help-you and all of the older children, all right? You have to try and help the young ones. Keep them moving, and keep them quiet. All right?"

"Why?" Tiil asked, frowning. "What's going on?"

"It's an emergency," Matisse said. "That's all you need to know."

"Why are *you* in charge?" Teor said, stepping up to his friend, folding his arms.

"You know my father?" Matisse said.

They nodded.

"You know he's a soldier?" Matisse asked.

Again, a nod.

"Well, that makes me a soldier too. It's hereditary. He's a captain, so I'm a captain. And that means I get to tell you what to do. You can be my sub-captains, though, if you promise to do what I say."

The two younger boys paused, then Tiil nodded. "Makes sense," he said.

"Good. Now *move*!" Matisse said.

The boys moved over, helping the younger children. Matisse began to herd them out the front door, into the darkened streets. Many of them, however, had caught onto the terror of the night, and were too scared to move.

"Matisse!" Idotris hissed, coming closer. "What is going on?"

"Ashe says New Elantris is under attack," Matisse said, kneeling beside her lanterns. "Soldiers are slaughtering everyone."

Idotris grew quiet.

She lit the lanterns, then stood. As she'd expected, the children-even the little ones-gravitated toward the light, and the sense of protection it offered. She handed one lantern to Idotris, and by its light she could see his terrified face.

"What do we do?" he asked with a shaking voice.

"We run," Matisse said, rushing out of the room.

And the children followed. Rather than be left behind in the dark, they ran after the light, Tiil and Teor helping the smaller ones, Idotris trying to hush those who began to cry. Matisse was worried at bringing light, but it seemed the only way. Indeed, they barely kept the children moving as it was, herding them in the fastest way out of New Elantris-which was also the way directly away from the screams, which were now frightfully close.

That also took them away from the populated sections of New Elantris. Matisse had hoped that they'd run into someone who could help as they moved. Unfortunately, those who weren't out practicing Aons were with her father, practicing with weapons. The only occupied buildings would have been the ones Ashe had indicated were being attacked. Their occupants. . . .

Don't think about that, Matisse thought as their ragged band of fifty children reached the edges of New Elantris. They were almost free. They could-

A voice suddenly yelled behind them, speaking in a harsh tongue Matisse didn't understand. Matisse spun, looking over the heads of frightened children. The center of New Elantris was glowing faintly. From firelight.

It was burning.

There, framed by the flames of death was a squad of three men in red uniforms. They carried swords.

Surely they wouldn't kill children, Matisse thought, her hand shaking as it held its lantern.

Then she saw the glint in the soldiers' eyes. A dangerous, grim look. They advanced on her group. Yes, they would kill children. Elantrian children, at least.

"Run," Matisse said, her voice quivering. Yet, she knew the children could never move faster than these men. "Run! Go and-"

Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a ball of light zipped from the sky. Ashe moved between the men, spinning around their heads, distracting them. The men cursed, waving their swords about in anger, looking up at the Seon.

Which is why they completely missed seeing Dashe charge them.

He took them from the side, coming through a shadowed alleyway in New Elantris. He knocked one down, sword flashing, then spun toward the other two as they cursed, turning away from the Seon.

We need to go! "Move!" she urged again, getting Idotris and the others to keep going. The children backed away from the swordfight, moving out into the night, following Idotris's light. Matisse stayed near the back, turning with concern toward her father.

He wasn't doing well. He was an excellent warrior, but the soldiers had been joined by two other men, and Dashe's body was weakened by being an Elantrian. Matisse stood, holding her lantern in trembling fingers, uncertain what to do. The children were sniffing in the dark behind her, their retreat painfully slow. Dashe fought bravely, his rusty sword replaced by one that Sarene must have sent. He knocked aside blade after blade, but he was getting surrounded.

I have to do something! Matisse thought, stepping forward. At that moment, Dashe turned, and she could see cuts on his face and body. The look of dread she saw in his eyes made her freeze with fright.

"Go," he whispered, his voice lost, but his lips moving. "Run!"

One of the soldiers rammed their sword through Dashe's chest.

"No!" Matisse screamed. But that only drew their attention as Dashe collapsed, quivering on the ground. The pain had become too much for him.

The soldiers looked at her, then began to advance. Dashe had taken down several of them, but there were three left.

Matisse felt numb.

"Please, my lady!" Ashe said, floating down beside her, hovering urgently. "You must run!"

Father is dead. No, worse-he's Hoed. Matisse shook her head, forcing herself to stay alert. She'd seen tragedy as a beggar. She could keep going. She had to.

These men would find the children. The children were too slow. Unless. . . . She looked up at the Seon beside her, noting the glowing Aon at his center. It meant light.

"Ashe," she said urgently as the soldiers approached. "Find Idotris ahead. Tell him to put out his lantern, then lead him and the others to someplace safe!"

"Someplace safe?" Ashe said. "I don't know if *any* place is safe."

"That library you spoke of," Matisse said, thinking quickly. "Where is it?"

"Straight north from here, my lady," Ashe said. "In a hidden chamber beneath a squat building. It is marked by Aon Rao."

"Galladon and Karata are there," Matisse said. "Take the children to them-Karata will know what to do."

"Yes," Ashe said. "Yes, that sounds good."

"Don't forget about the lantern," Matisse said as he flew away. She turned to face the advancing soldiers. Then, with a quivering finger, she raised a hand and began to draw.

Light burst from the air, following her finger in the air. She forced herself to remain steady, completing the Aon despite her fear. The soldiers paused as they watched her, then one of them said something in a guttural language she assumed was Fjordell. They continued to advance on her.

Matisse finished the Aon-Aon Ashe, the same one inside of her Seon friend. But, of course, the Aon didn't do anything. It just hung there, like they always did. The soldiers approached uncaringly, stepping right up to it.

This had better work, Matisse thought, then put her finger in the place that Galladon had described and drew the final line.

Immediately, the Aon-Aon Ashe-began to glow with a powerful light that was right in front of the Soldier's faces. They called out as the sudden flash of brilliance shone in their eyes, then cursed, stumbling back. Matisse reached down to grab her lantern and run.

The soldiers yelled after her, then began to follow. And, like the children before, they went toward the light-her light. Idotris and the others weren't that far away-she could see their shadows still moving in the night-but the soldiers had been blinded too much to notice the faint movements, and Idotris had put out his light. The only thing for the soldiers to focus on was her lantern.

Matisse led them away, into the dark night, carrying her lantern in terrified fingers. She could hear them pursuing behind her as she entered Elantris proper. Sludge and darkness replaced the cleanly cobbles of New Elantris, and Matisse had to stop moving as quickly, lest she slide and stumble.

She hurried anyway, rounding corners, trying to stay ahead of her pursuers. She felt so weak. Running was hard as an Elantrian. She didn't have the strength to go very quickly. Already, she was beginning to feel a powerful fatigue inside of her. She couldn't hear any more pursuit. Perhaps. . . .

She turned a corner and ran afoul of a pair of soldiers standing in the night. She paused in shock, looking up at the men, recognizing them from before.

They're trained soldiers, she thought. *Of course they know how to surround an enemy and cut them off!* She spun to run, but one of the

men grabbed her arm, laughing and saying something in Fjordell.

Matisse cried out, dropping the lantern. The soldier stumbled, but held her firm.

Think! Matisse told herself. *You only have a moment.* Her feet slipped in the sludge. She paused, then let herself fall, kicking at her captor's leg.

She was counting on one thing: She'd lived in Elantris. She knew how to move in the slime and sludge. These soldiers, however, didn't. Her kick proved true, and the soldier immediately slipped, stumbling into his companion and crashing back to the slimy cobbles as he released Matisse.

She scrambled to her feet, her beautiful bright clothing now stained with Elantris sludge. Her leg flared with a new pain-she'd twisted her ankle. She'd been so careful in the past to keep free of major pains, but this one was stronger than anything she'd gotten before, far stronger than her cheek cut. Her leg burned with a pain she could barely believe, and it didn't abate-it remained strong. An Elantrian's wounds would never heal.

Still, she forced herself to limp away. She moved without thinking, only wishing to get away from the soldiers. She heard them cursing, stumbling to their feet. Still, she kept going, hopping slightly. She didn't realize that she herself had made a circle until she saw the glow of New Elantris burning in front of her. She was back where she had begun.

She paused. There he was, Dashe, laying on the cobbles. She rushed to him, not caring any more about pursuit. Her father lay with the sword still impaling him, and she could hear him whispering.

"Run, Matisse. Run to safety. . . ." The mantra of a Hoed.

Matisse stumbled to her knees. She'd gotten the children to safety. That was enough. There was a noise behind her, and she turned to see a soldier approaching. His companion must have gone a different direction. Yet, this man was stained with slime, and she recognized him. He was the one she had kicked.

My leg hurts so much! She thought. She turned over, holding to Dashe's immobile body, too tired-and too pained-to move any further.

The soldier grabbed her by the shoulder and pulled her away from her father's corpse. He spun her around, the action bringing other pains to her arms.

"You tell me," he said in a thickly accented voice. "You tell me where other children went."

Matisse struggled in vain. "I don't know!" she said. But, she did. Ashe had told her. *Why did I ask him where the library was?* She thought, berating herself. *If I didn't know, I couldn't give them away!*

"You tell," the man said, holding her with one hand, reaching for his belt knife with the other. "You tell, or I hurt you. Bad."

Matisse struggled uselessly. If her Elantrian eyes could have formed tears, she would have been crying. As if to prove his point, the soldier held up his knife before her. Matisse had never felt such terror in her life.

And that was when the ground began to shake.

The horizon had begun to glow with the coming of dawn, but that light was overshadowed by a sudden burst of light from around the perimeter of the city. The soldier paused, looking up at the sky.

Suddenly, Matisse felt warm.

She didn't realize how much she'd missed feeling warm, how much she'd grown used to the stale coolness of an Elantrian body. But, the warmth seemed to flow through her, like someone had injected some hot liquid into her veins. She gasped at the beautiful, amazing feeling.

Something was *right*. Something was wonderfully right.

The soldier turned toward her suddenly. The very ground seemed to be shaking. He cocked his head, then reached out and rubbed a rough finger across her cheek, where she had been wounded long ago.

"Healed?" he said, confused.

She felt wonderful. She felt. . .her heart!

The man, looking confused, raised his knife again. "You healed," he said, "but I can hurt you again."

Her body felt stronger. Yet, she was still just a young girl, and he a trained soldier. She struggled, her mind barely beginning to comprehend that her skin was no longer blotched, but had turned a silvery color. It was happening! As Ashe had predicted! Elantris was returning!

And she was still going to die. It wasn't fair! She screamed in frustration, trying to wiggle free. The irony seemed perfect. The city was being healed, but that couldn't prevent this terrible man from-

"I think you missed something, friend," a voice suddenly said.

The soldier paused.

"If the light healed her," the voice said, "then it healed *me* too."

The soldier cried out in pain, then dropped Matisse, stumbling to the ground. She stepped back, and as the terrible man collapsed, she could finally see who was standing behind: her father, glowing with

an inner light, the taint removed from his body. He seemed like a god, silvery and spectacular.

His clothing was ripped where he'd been wounded him, but the skin was healed. In his hand, he held the very sword that had been impaling him moments before.

She ran to him, crying-she could finally cry again!-and she grabbed him in an embrace.

"Where are the other children, Matisse," he said urgently.

"I took care of them, Father," she whispered. "Everyone has a job, and that's mine. I take care of the children."

#

"Interesting," Raoden said. "And, what did happen to the children?" Raoden asked.

"I led them to the library," Ashe said. "Galladon and Karata were gone by then-we must have missed them as they ran back to New Elantris. But, I hid the children inside, and stayed with them to keep them calm. I was so worried about what was happening inside the city, but those poor things. . . ."

"I understand," Raoden said. "And Matisse. . . Dashe's little daughter. I had no idea what she'd gone through." Raoden smiled. He'd gifted Dashe with two Seons-ones whose masters had died, and who had found themselves without anyone to serve once they recovered their wits when Elantris was restored-in thanks for his services for New Elantris. Dashe had given one to his daughter.

"Which Seon did she end up with?" Raoden asked. "Ati?"

"Actually, no," Ashe said. "I believe it was Aeo."

"Equally appropriate," Raoden said, smiling and standing as the door opened. His wife, Queen Sarene, entered, pregnant belly first.

"I agree," Ashe said, hovering over to Sarene.

Aeo. It meant bravery.

THE END

If you enjoyed this story, consider making a [donation to Brandon via Paypal!](#) (You can do so with a credit card, a PayPal account, or even a check.) Among other things (such as funding his Magic Card addiction) this will let him know that people are interested in further short stories in his worlds. (He has some plans for a few Mistborn prequel short stories, for instance.)

If the Donation links for his short stories do well enough, he'll probably just go ahead and post new stories here to his website instead of giving Amazon Shorts a crack at them first. Note that the

stories will ALWAYS be free when posted here. He'd much rather let you read first, then send donations if you want, as he knows not every short story will work for every reader.

ANNOTATIONS

PART ONE: MATISSE

All right, now the annotation. This story actually has a very interesting backstory.

If we flash back to January 2006, we find me having been dating Pemberly (her real name is Emily, but she goes by Pemberly on-line) for about two months time. Our relationship was still quite new, and we weren't exclusive yet. (Though I wanted to be. I was pretty sure I wanted to marry her by that point.)

Well, at one of our dates, Pemberly told me this amazing story. It seems that one of her eighth grade students-a girl named Matisse-had done a book report on ELANTRIS. Now, Matisse didn't know that her teacher was dating me. She didn't even know that Pemberly KNEW me. It was just one of those bizarre coincidences that happens just to prove to us all that the world is a funny place.

Now, when I say book report, that doesn't get across the scope of what Matisse did. Being a clever, creative girl, she went the extra mile. Instead of a simple write-up on the book, she did a "Dragonology" style book on ELANTRIS. This thing is amazing; it has sketches and bios of the characters, strips of Elantrian cloth stapled in as examples, little pouches filled with materials from the books, all of that. A total multi-sensory experience dedicated to the novel, all hand-made. Pemberly showed it to me, and it was honestly just about the coolest, most humbling thing I'd ever seen. Matisse had obviously loved the book very much.

That set me thinking of something I could do as a thank-you surprise to Matisse, who still didn't know that her teacher was dating one of her favorite authors. I'd had this idea itching in the back of my head.

PART TWO: HOLES IN THE STORY

In any novel, there are decisions you make regarding what to put in and what to leave out. A lot of authors talk about the 'iceberg' theory-that for any good book, there's a lot of story and worldbuilding beneath the surface that the author knows, but the reader never discovers. These things give weight and a foundation for the story you DO see, allowing it to feel more real and more engaging because the author has thought through so much of what isn't stated.

In ELANTRIS, there are a couple of these holes. Places where I knew what was happening off-screen, but decided that I couldn't talk about it in the book. (In this novel, there were generally two reasons for these holes. One was if I couldn't get a viewpoint character into the right location at the right time; the chapter triad format earned me a lot of things, but also constrained me sometimes. At the end of the book, however, the triad system fell apart on purpose, and so I COULD so random other viewpoints. In the case of what was happening with the children in Elantris, however, I decided that there was already too much happening during the climax, and these sections were the ones that had to be cut.)

So I knew what was going on inside Elantris when the attack by the Dakhor came. In the back of my mind, I also knew that the children were saved and protected by Dashe and Ashe the Seon, kept from being slaughtered by the attack. I didn't want them to fall like the others; Karata had worked so hard to protect them, and letting the children not have to suffer through the slaughter at New Elantris was my gift to her. A kind of compensation for her own sacrifice at the end of the novel.

PART THREE: HOPE OF ELANTRIS

I'd been itching to write another ELANTRIS story. Because of the nature of publishing, I knew that I couldn't do a sequel to the book at the time, as the MISTBORN novels made so much more sense to publish. However, Matisse's project gave me the inspiration that I needed to turn my attention back to ELANTRIS. I stopped writing on MISTBORN: THE WELL OF ASCENSION for two days, and wrote out this section of the ELANTRIS story.

Because Matisse had inspired me, I decided that I would name a character after her. I also felt that, if I was taking the time to write a short story in the world, I wanted to introduce a new character rather than putting the story from Dashe's viewpoint. (As would have been likely had this section ended up in the final novel.) Therefore, it was reasonable to write it from the viewpoint of the character I'd just named after Matisse.

The Matisse in the story doesn't act like the real Matisse. I didn't KNOW the real Matisse; I'd never met her. (Though I did have Pemberly describe her so that I could make the character look like her. Matisse was one of my wife's favorite students, as you might imagine from her doing fantastic projects like the Elantris book.)

After writing the story, I sent a copy with Pemberly to give to

Matisse as a gift and a thank you. I can only imagine how surprised she was to turn in a project based on one of her favorite books, then get back a short story written by the author including her as one of the characters in the world. This is the kind of nifty little thing you can pull off once in a while as a novelist, and I just couldn't pass by the opportunity.

(Of course, the fact that I'd just put one of Pemberly's favorite students into a story for her, then let Pemberly give the gift, did not escape me. I can't help but think it got me a few bonus points. After all, we DID start dating exclusively just a short time after that. . . .)

Matisse gave us the original Elantris-ology book she had made as a wedding gift. She still comes to a lot of my signings, and as far as I can tell is still one of the most awesome people alive. (Though I'm biased toward anyone who says nice things about my books.)

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION

So there's the backstory. Now, the question comes up, what do I think of the story itself?

Well, it's hard for me to separate the backstory and history of the story from the text itself. For me, this story is a piece of my history with Pemberly, and is intertwined with a lot of the emotions and experiences of that crazy year from summer 2005 to summer 2006 when my first novel was released and I met and married my wife.

Looking back at this story, I think it might be a tad on the sentimental side. (How could it help but be, considering. . . .) I'm bringing a lot from my own experiences to the characters, and Dashe and Matisse became full and real characters to me. However, I'm not certain I justify their relationship and characters enough to earn the emotion of the short story.

I hope that it doesn't come off as too melodramatic. (Read outside the context of the ELANTRIS novel, I think that it might.) I wrote it quickly, and I'm afraid it's not as polished or as intricate as I might have otherwise been able to do. I realize it's not the finest piece of work I've done, and I certainly wouldn't suggest it to anyone who hasn't read ELANTRIS itself, as the story doesn't work at all (emotionally or plot wise) if you aren't familiar with the novel. It's also not a good introduction to my work, I think.

But for what the story is, I'm quite pleased with it.

Thanks for reading!

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